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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lansing to Install Rainbow Flag Crosswalks *Permanent installations being planned*

[LANSING, MI, June 20, 2018]

On Saturday, June 16, the City of Lansing unveiled a temporary Pride flag crosswalk at the starting point of the Pride march, and offered a gesture of the new administration's commitment to LGBTQIA inclusion with the announcement of four permanent rainbow Pride flag painted crosswalk installations in Downtown Lansing. The installations will point toward downtown from the North, South, East and West sides of town. A timeline for completion of the project is unknown at this time as the the City of Lansing is currently still actively seeking funding for the project.

The crosswalks will be painted in the colors of the new LGBTQIA Pride flag designed in 2017 by the City of Philadelphia that includes the colors black and brown to demonstrate the city's commitment to advocating for LGBTQIA people of color.

Phiwa Langeni, Director of the Salus Center, expressed appreciation for Lansing's choice of the new, more inclusive, Pride flag saying, "Adding black and brown stripes is a visual reminder that people of color have the highest rates of harm. To put them in such a visible place on this flag of ours, and right out in the city, can serve as an urgent call for us to vision a new, more life-giving way forward, truly committing to the full rights and safety of *all* members of the LGBTQ community. We add and honor these stripes to include and deepen our commitments."

The project in Lansing was taken up by the Mayor's office at the request of the Lansing Association for Human Rights (LAHR) and was made possible through collaboration with the Salus Center. The idea for the Pride flag crosswalk was inspired by the City of Kalamazoo taking steps to paint a temporary traditional Pride flag crosswalk for this year's Kalamazoo Pride festivities.

Mayor Schor announced the permanent installment at the Pride Rally. In a statement he said, "Lansing is a fun and exciting and welcomes everyone. What better way to showcase that than to paint some of our crosswalks the colors of this rainbow, which is inclusive of all of our residents and visitors! This small gesture is to show that everyone is not only welcome but is also celebrated in Michigan's Capital city."

Emily Dievendorf, LAHR President, emphasized the significance of the visibility, “There is power in an open door, and even more in the acknowledgement that we belong. There was no hesitation from Mayor Schor’s office when we proposed the idea. Lansing’s LGBTQIA leadership worked with the Mayor to put them in place because we know Lansing’s LGBTQIA communities, particularly our communities of color in these volatile times, deserve to be welcome and at the center. We will soon have four rainbow arrows pointing permanently at our state capitol and Lansing City Hall. We want Lansing’s LGBTQIA folks to use those as guides to be heard, and seen, and represented. We want LGBTQIA people in those elected offices. We want LGBTQIA folks to use those rainbow crosswalks to walk that way.”

The direction of the crosswalks is intended to be a symbolic welcoming of the LGBTQIA community as downtown Lansing is uniquely the center for the legislature and where the LGBTQIA community will find their own Mayor’s office. This gesture is one way to say LGBTQIA voices in downtown Lansing are welcome and should be heard here.

The Lansing Association for Human Rights (LAHR) pursues justice and equality for LGBTQIA peoples through community-led advocacy, connection and education in the Lansing area. Salus Center is an LGBTQ resource and community center in Lansing for learning, teaching, community, support, and service.

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